

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IN, UK
SUBJECT: INDIA-UK CONSULTATIVE TALKS

REF: LONDON 3992

1. FCO DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY MICHAEL WILFORD WAS IN DELHI FOR ANNUAL CONSULTATIVE TALKS WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY MARCH 7-8, IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE DISCUSSIONS ON NUCLEAR QUESTIONS REPORTED IN REFTEL. WILFORD AND OTHER UK HIGHCOMM OFFICERS HAVE TOLD US THAT THE TALKS WERE OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE, PARTICULARLY ON THOSE ISSUES THE BRITISH WERE INTERESTED IN. THE INDIAN SPOKESMAN (SECRETARY EAST TRIVEDI) CONSUMED SEVERAL HOURS IN REVIEWING INDO-PAK RELATIONS OVER THE YEARS, CONVEYING NO NEW INFORMATION AND OCCUPYING SO MUCH TIME THAT THERE WAS VIRTUALLY NO OPPORTUNITY FOR EXCHANGES ON SINO-INDIAN, INDO-SOVIET, OR INDO-ARAB RELATIONS.

2. THE GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE DISCUSSIONS BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER (CONCURRED BY WILFORD) IN DISCUSSION IN THE HIGH COMMISSION WAS "SIMPLY BORING". THERE WAS SOME SPIRITED DISCUSSION ABOUT THE INDIAN OCEAN, GAN, AND DIEGO GARCIA WITH TRIVEDI TAXING THE BRITISH
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STH NOT TAKING SUFFICIENT ACCOUNT OF THE VIEWS OF THE

LITTORAL STATES IN AGREEING TO ALLOW A FACILITY TO BE PUT ON DIEGO GARCIA. WILFORD RESPONDED FIRMLY THAT THE INDIAN WERE BEING DISINGENOUS IN ACEPTING AT FACE VALUE THE CLAIMS OF SOMALIA, IRAQ, AND YEMEN THAT THERE WERE NO SOVIET BASES ON THEIR TERRITORY, THAT DIEGO REPRESENTED THE ONLY WESTERN PRESENCE IN THE OCEAN, AND THAT THERE WAS NO BASIS FOR THE GOI COMPLAINT. ON PAKISTAN, THE INDIANS TOOK EXCEPTION (FAIRLY GENTLY) TO THE U.S. CHANGE IN ARMS POLICY AND THE BRITISH RESPONDED ALONG

LINES CLOSELY RESEMBLING THOSE WE HAVE BEEN USING OURSELVES. WILFORD CAME AWAY WITH THE "IMPRESSION" THAT THE INDIANS EXPECTED TO START UP THEIR TALKS WITH THE PAKISTAIIS FAIRLY SHORTLY, BUT TRIVEDI WAS VAGUE ON SPECIFICS. AT ONE POINT WILFORD CHALLENGED THE INDIANS TO SUGGEST A BETTER LEADER FOR PAKISTAN (FROM THE INDIAN VANTAGE-POINT) THAN BHUTTO. THE INDIANS CHANGED THE SUBJECT.

3. WILFORD TOLD US ABSOLUTELY NOTHING OF INTEREST EMERGED FROM THE VERY BRIEF AND FLEETING REFERENCES TO CHINA, THE MIDDLE EAST, OR THE SOVIETS. THE DISCUSSIONS WERE FRIENDLY AND SOCIABLE ENOUGH OZVEN THIS ABSENCE OF CONTENT. PRESUMABLE THE INDIANS MAY HAVE BEEN MORE SATISFIED WITH THE EXCHANGES SINCE, WILFORD SAID,THE BRITISH HAD GONE OUT OF THEIR WAY TO BE FORTHCOMING IN DISCUSSING THEIR OWN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EEC,UK-SOVIET RELATIONS, AND OTHER EUROPEAN QUESTIONS IN THE HOPE TZFIATD # ULD#PULL THE INDIANS MORE INTO THE OPEN ON THEIR OWN POLICIES. WILFORD AND HIS BRITISH COLLEAGUES WERE PRIVATELY SOMEWHAT ANNOYED AT THE FAILURE OF THE INDIANS TO RESPOND TO THIS APPROACH. SAXBE

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED

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